

**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please replace the paragraphs beginning at page 11, line 19, with the following rewritten paragraphs:

An elastic ring 13 is incorporated into the inside of a tip and side opening 12 of the internal needle main body section 6. When this ring 13 is fitted into a peripheral groove 14 provided in the vicinity of the proximal end side of the holding portion 4, axial movement of the internal needle main body section 6 is restricted against the holding portion 4, and the internal needle main body section 6 is fixed to the holding portion 4. The holding portion 4 consists of a main body section 15 (housing) and a cover section 16. The main body section 15 is removably fixed to the proximal end of the insert portion 3 by means of a screw 17 fixed to the tip end. An O-ring 18 consisting of an elastic material provided adjacent to the screw 17 ensures air tightness between the insert portion 3 and the holding portion 4.

As shown in FIG. 3, a flap valve 19 (opening/closing valve) is provided as an opening/closing valve inside of a cover section 16. This flap valve 19 can be rotated between a first position (refer to FIG. 4) where the flat valve 19 is parallel to the longitudinal axial direction of the sheath tube 1 and a second position (refer to FIG. 3) where the flat valve 19 is orthogonal

to the longitudinal axial direction of the sheath tube 1 about a rotary shaft 20 extending in a direction orthogonal to the longitudinal axial direction of the sheath tube 1. In addition, the flap valve 19 is always biased to the second position by means of a spiral spring 21 spirally held around the rotary shaft 20.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 14, line 3, with the following rewritten paragraph:

A seal receiving portion 25 is formed at the proximal end side of the cover section 16. A sealing member 27 consisting of an elastic material is sandwiched between this seal receiving portion 25 and a seal fixing frame 26 as a fixing member to be fitted therewith, and is fixed. The sealing member 27 has a sealing cap portion 29 as a first sealing portion at its proximal end side, and a cylindrical sealing ring portion 28 (second sealing portion) as a second sealing portion at its tip end side. In addition, a small-diameter sealing portion 31 as a third sealing portion is coupled with the sealing cap portion 29 via an arm portion 30 extending by forming a right angle therewith (extending along the longitudinal axial direction of the insert portion 3 in a state (shown in FIG. 3) in which the sealing

member 27 is mounted to the seal receiving portion 25 of the holding portion 4).

Please replace the paragraphs beginning at page 15, line 7, with the following rewritten paragraphs:

A large-diameter hold 33 (port) communicating with the internal space 32 of the sealing ring portion 28 is provided at the center of the sealing cap portion 29. When a medical instrument such as internal needle 2 or forceps (not shown) is inserted through this large-diameter hole 33, an internal face of the sealing cap portion 29 forming the large-diameter hole 33 comes into intimate contact with the peripheral face of the medical instrument, and a space between the medical instrument and the holding portion 4 is sealed. That is, the internal space 32 of the sealing ring portion 28 is sealed to the outside.

A short diameter hole 34 (port) whose internal diameter is smaller than that of the large-diameter hole 33 and a ring-shaped mounting jaw portion 35 are provided at a small-diameter sealing portion 31. When an arm portion 30 is elastically bent, and a mounting jaw portion 35 is pushed into a mounting hole 36 at the proximal end of the seal fixing frame 26, as shown in FIG. 4, the large-diameter hole 33 and the small-diameter hole 34 are arranged in line along the longitudinal axial direction of the

insert portion 3. When a medical instrument (such as forceps) whose diameter is smaller than the internal diameter of the large-diameter hole 33 is inserted into the small-diameter hole 34, the small-diameter sealing portion 31 comes into intimate contact with the peripheral face of this medical instrument, and ensures air tightness. The arm portion 30 of the sealing member 27 extends to the proximal end side along a direction orthogonal to the extending direction of the proximal end face of the cover section 16. In a state in which the sealing member 27 is mounted to the seal receiving portion 25, the tip end of the arm portion 30 is brought into intimate contact with the proximal end face of the cover section 16. A lip portion 31a is formed at the end of the arm portion 30 extending from the small-diameter sealing portion 31 to the proximal end side. When this lip portion 31a is gripped by hand, and the sealing member 27 is pulled, the mounting jaw portion 35 can be removed from the mounting hole 36.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 27, line 19, with the following rewritten paragraph:

FIGS. 18A and 18B show a fourth modified example of a sealing member. As illustrated, a sealing member according to this modified example is constructed as a valve mechanism mounted to the cover section of the sheath tube. That is, a cylindrical

frame 93 is provided at the proximal end of a cover section 92 of a sheath tube 91. A rotary knob 94 and a plurality of blades 95 disposed at equal intervals along the peripheral direction of the rotary knob 94 are provided at the inside of the frame 93. Each blade 95 (hole diameter changeable member) can rotate about a pin 96 fixed to the rotary knob 94 and serves as a hole diameter changeable member for changing the hole diameter of a sealing valve 100 inside of the blades 95.